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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 101: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/51/3 (Parts I and II), A/51/327, A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/357, A/51/450, and A/C.3/51/L.2 and L.3)

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AGENDA ITEM 158: QUESTION OF THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST ORGANIZED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME (continued) (A/C.3/51/7)

1. Ms. SAIGA (Japan), referring to agenda item 102, said that her delegation was seriously concerned about the increasing sale and use of drugs and psychotropic substances in all countries. In spite of the efforts by Governments and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the scourge of drugs continued to destroy human lives and impede sustainable development, shaking the foundations of national security.

2. Japan was pleased that that theme had been taken up at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 1996 and felt that that discussion should help generate momentum for the proposed special session of the General Assembly in 1998. Her delegation agreed with the view expressed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/469), that a high-level discussion of drug control issues could result in a reaffirmation by Governments of the political importance of drug control and in renewed commitment by Member States to the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. That process should start as soon as possible in order to ensure a successful outcome since the special session, which would last only three days, would deal with a range of issues and might lead to a revised Global Programme of Action.

3. For several years, Japan had been drawing the attention of the international community to the growing illicit trafficking in and abuse of synthetic drugs, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants, which had spread not only to East Asia, but also to South-East Asia, North America and Europe. It was hoped that Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/29 would be implemented as soon as possible. Japan was looking forward to the second expert meeting on that issue in Shanghai in November, at which it was expected that comprehensive countermeasures would be proposed against the illicit manufacture, sale and use of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors.

4. It was regrettable that mechanism for monitoring progress made in implementing the Global Programme, adopted by the General Assembly at its 1990 special session, had not yet been established despite the efforts of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNDCP to facilitate reporting by Governments. With the beginning of the second half of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse (1991-2000), it was essential to take concrete measures to implement the recommendations of the Programme.

5. Japan recognized that there was a causal relationship between poverty and illicit drug production. It had extended support for development programmes in Asia and Latin America in the hope of reducing the cultivation of crops from which such drugs were extracted. While alternative development programmes required a commitment on the part of farmers and the Governments of producing countries, those programmes needed a massive mobilization of financial resources from international financial institutions as well as close coordination of aid agencies under the leadership of UNDCP. Japan had decided to contribute $330,000 to a drug-control and development project in Myanmar through UNDCP.

6. Although many delegations had stressed the importance of the activities of UNDCP and international cooperation in the drug-control field, the implementation of technical cooperation projects was being affected by the decline in voluntary contributions by Member States. Japan welcomed the adoption of resolution 10 by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs entitled "Towards a new system of financing activities of the United Nations Drug Control Programme", in which the Commission, inter alia, supported the proposal by the Executive Director to expand the basis of the Programme's financing system, increase general purpose contributions to the Fund by approximately $15 million annually and increase the proportion of such contributions in relation to the total funds. Japan urged all Member States to increase their financial support for international drug control, particularly their general purpose contributions. Her Government, for its part, had decided to contribute $6.7 million for the Fund, of which $5.2 million would be for general purposes.

7. Much remained to be done to reduce the illicit sale and use of narcotic drugs. It was precisely for that reason that Japan hoped that drug control would continue to be a priority in the next medium-term plan.

8. Mr. GIROUX (Canada), referring to agenda item 101, said that he would speak on behalf of Canada and Australia, which cooperated closely in the work of the Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. There was no single solution to combating crime. There were increasingly sophisticated forms of crime; and globalization, new technologies and easier international transportation had made a much more complex environment in which to fight crime. Results could be achieved only by working together and adopting a global approach to the problem. The achievements of recent years had been made possible by a focus on priorities, a pragmatic approach, marshalling scarce resources and hard work.

9. At its fifth session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had considered the elimination of violence against women, the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials, and illicit firearms. Canada had provided support to the Commission, notably in helping to draft manuals on computer crime, domestic violence and model mutual legal assistance agreements.

10. Throughout the world, criminal organizations were diversifying their activities. In Canada, their activities included smuggling illegal aliens, credit-card fraud, money-laundering and illicit traffic in drugs and firearms. Those problems, however, were not unique to Canada. The Solicitor-General of Canada had noted recently, on the occasion of a national forum on providing

police and others with the necessary tools to deal effectively with organized crime, that borders did not stop criminal organizations and that States would be able to combat them effectively only if they cooperated at all levels.

11. Canada had adopted a multidisciplinary approach based on both bilateral cooperation and the training of police forces, which, in order to be effective, must also respect the rights of citizens. Canada offered and would continue to offer training to other countries, where needed, on police matters.

12. The work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and other multilateral bodies, including the G-7 countries, had helped to identify problems and focus the attention of the world community on solutions. He noted with satisfaction, in particular, that the Commission had proposed the adoption of the Declaration on Crime and Public Security, which outlined the priorities for the coming years. Canada and Australia also extended their thanks to the Government of Poland for its initiative and were prepared to work closely to develop recommendations for stepping up efforts to combat transnational crime.

13. Canada and Australia were gravely concerned about the issues of violence against women and children. In the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Canada had worked on the elaboration of concrete measures to eliminate violence against women and would continue those efforts the following year at the Commission's sixth session.

14. In order to combat corruption, which undermined economic development and affected the poorest of the poor, action could be taken at both the domestic and the international levels. Canada, for example, had in place a conflict-of-interest code designed to guide the conduct of public officials and office holders. At the international level, his country had participated in the work of the OECD, the Commonwealth and the Council of Europe and in the drafting of the OAS Convention on Corruption. Canada and Australia supported the recently adopted International Code of Conduct for Public Officials.

15. Canada, which acted as a coordinator in the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the work on illicit firearms, hoped that effective multilateral action would be taken in that field. He encouraged all countries to complete the questionnaire for the United Nations study on firearms regulations. That would complement the work being done in many countries on domestic gun-control legislation.

16. Mr. WILMOT (Ghana), speaking on agenda items 101 and 102, said that crime and drug abuse were transnational phenomena which fed on each other and constituted a major threat to peace, security and development. To combat them successfully, it was necessary to have compatible mechanisms at the national level and improved international cooperation at all levels. It was for that reason that his delegation appreciated the efforts that were being made by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to achieve synergies of action and coordination of their respective programmes.

17. With regard to agenda item 101, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had considered at its fifth session the issues of organized

transnational crime, proceeds of crime, money-laundering, and international cooperation in criminal matters and had indicated how the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) could contribute to the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.

18. UNAFRI was recognized as a dynamic, operational instrument in the fight against crime, especially in its transnational dimensions, but it was not being given the resources to enable it to take action. While it was the responsibility of African States to sustain the Institute, the economic sit ation of most of them made it impossible for them to do so. The lack of funding thus resulted in the cessation of vital programmes of benefit not only to the region but also to the international community as a whole. Ghana therefore appealed to all of the partners of Africa to provide the Institute with the necessary budgetary and extrabudgetary resources.

19. With regard to agenda item 102, Ghana had participated actively in the high-level segment of the 1996 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the theme of international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities. For the first time, a concerted effort had been made to link the question of drug production with that of demand reduction and control and to seek a holistic and balanced approach to the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

20. With the active cooperation of non-governmental organizations, Ghana had posted some positive results in the fight against the drug menace, through the implementation of enforcement measures, education and preventive programmes aimed at the general population and the sensitization of the judiciary and mass media.

21. As a member of the technical committee charged with formulating anti-drug strategies at the subregional level under the auspices of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Ghana was concerned that the committee had not yet become operational, even though cross-border drug trafficking was on the rise.

22. In order to deal with the increase in economic crimes resulting from the liberalization of the industrial and financial sectors, Ghana had established a National Serious Fraud Office to investigate serious frauds, such as money-laundering. The success of the Office would depend on whether UNDCP and the international community were able to develop a mechanism for information sharing and to establish international legal instruments to combat fraud and to confiscate the proceeds.

23. Ghana appreciated the work being done by Member States, United Nations agencies and the international community as a whole to deal with crime and drug abuse and appealed to them to mobilize the resources needed for the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and for UNDCP.

24. Mr. MOREIRA GARCIA (Brazil), speaking on agenda item 101, said that the Brazilian Government had taken the lead in innovations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice by creating special criminal courts to try

persons accused of petty crimes (punishable by a prison term of less than one year). Such courts also had the authority to impose alternative punishments (mandatory community service, loss of certain rights, fines), where appropriate. As a result of major reforms in the judicial system of Brazil, police officers and judges now had more time to devote to serious crimes. The Brazilian Government had also begun to decentralize penal establishments in favour of smaller industrial or agricultural units located as close as possible to the prisoner's community of origin in order to ensure easier access to work and study opportunities and to facilitate the reintegration of prisoners into society. That initiative, which benefitted from substantial Government funding, had been very well received by organizations of the civil society and was the basis for the action to be taken to establish, under the supervision of an independent body composed of governmental and non-governmental representatives, minimum rules for the treatment of offenders. A new law had also been enacted to extend the scope of police operations to combat organized crime and included special provisions governing bank secrecy and phone tapping.

25. In the United Nations, Brazil was an active participant in the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. At the Commission's previous session, Brazil had presented a draft resolution on the strengthening of international cooperation in that field and urging the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme to more actively support projects on judicial and penitentiary reform. Brazil believed that the prevention of crime and the proper functioning of the criminal justice system were essential to the stability and internal security of countries, as well as to democracy, and had shown its interest in another resolution which dealt with the computerization of criminal justice operations and the compilation, analysis and use of data on crime and criminal justice. It had also expressed its support for the United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security, which had been elaborated by the Commission to combat serious forms of transnational crime. Brazil was party to all the international conventions on drugs and had recently introduced draft legislation to cover money-laundering. With the experience gained from the drafting of that legislation, it was recommending that the General Assembly should include in the agenda of its special session on international drug control the question of the harmonization of internal legislation on money-laundering.

26. Brazil believed that the proposal for an international framework convention to combat organized crime deserved support and urged the Third Committee to make a recommendation on the subject. Indeed, while individual countries must take measures to fight organized crime, concerted action by the international community against that worldwide scourge was also indispensable.

27. On the question of international drug control, Brazil supported the statement made by Bolivia on behalf of the Rio Group under the current agenda item. He recalled the declaration made by the Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group at their Tenth Summit held in Cochabamba in September 1996 and again expressed his satisfaction at the decision of the General Assembly to convene a special session on international drug control.

28. At the regional level, Brazil had actively supported various drug control initiatives, including initiatives taken within the framework of the community

of Portuguese speaking countries, the Southern Cone Common Market and the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. At the bilateral level, it had signed agreements on drug control with every country in South America and with the United States of America, Cuba, the Russian Federation, Portugal, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Denmark and South Africa. At the national level, it had adopted new laws on the control of chemical precursors and had proposed the creation of a new federal agency to investigate crimes related to drug trafficking. Brazil had invested millions of dollars in the establishment of a drug control department and modernization of the federal police, especially border and maritime surveillance.

29. Brazil's drug control policy was based on the following principles: recognition of the socio-political dimension of the drug problem, responsibility for which was shared by drug consumers and drug producers; non-acceptance of a direct connection between drugs and terrorism, even though that connection did exist in some countries; recognition that in drug control policies, the prevention of drug abuse and rehabilitation of drug addicts were as important as the repression of drug trafficking; respect for the human rights, cultural traditions and environment of each country in crop eradication programmes; and recognition of the link between drug production and the socio-economic situation of developing countries.

30. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Costa Rica) said that he shared the concern expressed by Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, with regard to the imbalance between the growing threat posed by organized crime at the world level and the resources available to the United Nations to deal with it. He endorsed the Director-General's appeal for the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme to be strengthened, for its activities to be maintained and for financial support to be provided to it. He hoped that that strengthening would be real and would not be confined to reclassifying a branch as a division without providing it with the human and financial resources commensurate with its responsibilities. He was also concerned about implementation which was partial, although portrayed as full, under the pretext of reform, of programmes decided on by the General Assembly. In addition to denying reality, that approach undermined the role played by the United Nations as an agent for economic and social development.

31. After reviewing the United Nations System-wide Plan of Action on Drug Abuse Control, his delegation felt that the approach of developing coordinated strategies taking into account the mandate and direction of United Nations bodies was appropriate both from the point of view of methodology and from that of the rational use of limited available resources. However, it was regrettable that the plan of action was concerned only with demand reduction and neglected other aspects of that delicate problem, such as the diversion of chemical precursors, transit networks, distribution methods and money-laundering which, encouragingly, were taken into account in other initiatives such as the Mexico initiative. Costa Rica favoured the organization in 1998 of a special session of the General Assembly on international drug control which would be an opportunity to carry out an in-depth review of those strategies.

32. Mr. PACE (Malta), associating his delegation with the statement made by the representative of Ireland, on behalf of the European Union, on agenda item 102,

said that Malta, aware of the threat posed by international drug trafficking not only to individuals and communities, but also to security and stability within States and regions, was tackling the drug problem as intensively and comprehensively as possible at all levels.

33. At the national level, those activities were being conducted by the national commission against the abuse of drugs and alcohol and the agency against drug and alcohol abuse. The commission, composed of experts, was responsible for formulating national policy for drug prevention, treatment and law enforcement and the agency was responsible for implementing that policy at the practical level. Recognizing the importance of prevention in order to achieve demand reduction, his Government had developed a strategy which accorded a major role to the family and also involved teachers, voluntary organizations, youth, media, parents, local councils and the leisure industry. It had adopted a social model rather than a medical model in the treatment and rehabilitation field and was giving priority to community services. Through its association for drug prevention and action, the International Confederation of Catholic Organizations for Charitable and Social Action (CARITAS) (Malta) was also playing a very important role in helping drug addicts, their families and the community through different activities.

34. His Government was committed to fighting illicit trafficking on the basis of legislation which had recently been strengthened and now provided for life imprisonment for major traffickers and ten-year prison terms for other cases, compulsory prison terms for persons involved in drug trafficking, cultivation and importation, confiscation of the property of traffickers and the criminalization of money-laundering. Malta encouraged international cooperation in that field, was promoting coordination and training of the police force, the customs services and the armed forces within the context of bilateral and multilateral agreements, and had joined Italy's computerized anti-drug system. In that respect, his delegation underlined the importance of the work of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and looked forward to the proposed special session of the General Assembly on the question.

35. Over the next five years, Malta planned to further strengthen the administrative and legislative means available to it to combat drug trafficking, sustain its opposition to the legalization of drugs, both hard and soft, involve all the actors of civil society in a coordinated strategy of prevention and education, enhance the drug-related services available for the family and the community, if necessary calling on the voluntary sector for assistance, and establish a continuous systematic evaluation exercise of the services offered in the preventive and therapeutic field.

36. Convinced of the need for Member States to combat new forms of crime, Malta had strengthened its legislation in that area and reinforced its law enforcement capacities, which had enabled it, with the cooperation of multilateral and bilateral partners, to register success in fighting such activities as money-laundering and drug trafficking. It stressed the need to respect the fundamental human rights of offenders and promote their eventual rehabilitation. In Malta, criminal justice was regulated by the provisions of the Criminal Code, the Constitution and a number of laws dealing with particular aspects of criminal justice and was being developed on the basis of the rules and standards

adopted by the Council of Europe and the United Nations, which served as a point of reference, and often as a model. As a party to the relevant international conventions, Malta was ensuring that, in all criminal proceedings, the rights of the accused were respected by an independent and impartial judiciary.

37. In the face of the alarming increase in transnational organized crime, enhanced cooperation and adherence to and implementation of existing legal instruments should be the priority of the international community.

38. Mr. BEN AMOR (Tunisia), speaking on agenda item 102, said that his country, which had participated actively in the high-level debate of the Economic and Social Council on international cooperation for drug control, welcomed the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/17, which recommended the convening of a special session on the question. The special session could provide an opportunity for Governments to reaffirm the political importance of drug control, establish a new point of departure for renewed collective action against that scourge, and lead to the adoption of concrete measures.

39. As a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the preparatory body for the special session on the drug problem, Tunisia believed that any action taken in that field must have a development dimension and must be conceived within the overall framework of the struggle against poverty, as the linkages between poverty and the production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs had already been sufficiently proved. The vicious cycle of the production of and illicit trafficking in drugs would be broken only if the question of the economic recovery and development of producer countries was given the attention it deserved throughout the United Nations system.

40. Tunisia welcomed the activities conducted by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). It shared the concern voiced by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at the decrease in resources available to UNDCP and urged that the necessary funds should be allocated to the Programme so that it could effectively perform its duties.

41. Regarding agenda item 101, he said that special attention must be focused on the concrete implementation of the recommendations and resolutions of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and on the follow-up to the Political Declaration and Global Action Plan elaborated by the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime. A broad consensus had emerged from those two meetings concerning the need to fight against the spread of crime in all its forms. Criminality was a huge obstacle to the development and economic growth of countries.

42. Within the framework of its comprehensive development strategy, Tunisia had elaborated a programme to strengthen national security structures in order to preserve peace and social cohesion and protect its citizens from the threat of organized crime. Nonetheless, Tunisia was aware that individual efforts were not sufficiently effective against such crime, which was spreading on an international scale and whose networks knew no borders. It therefore welcomed the coordinating role played by United Nations bodies in the fight against that scourge and welcomed, in particular, efforts undertaken to elaborate a framework convention against organized transnational crime.

43. The convention should be elaborated by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as the principal policy-making body of the United Nations in that field. Moreover, a convention should stress the linkage between organized transnational crime and terrorism, in accordance with the resolutions adopted in that regard by the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, and by the Economic and Social Council. In that connection, his delegation was surprised to note that, despite the increasingly obvious linkages between organized transnational crime and terrorism, it was maintained in some quarters that those linkages were more fortuitous than institutional. In that connection, he referred to the report of the Secretary-General on the question (E/CN.15/1996/7), in which the Secretary-General requested the international community to focus special attention on organized transnational crime and terrorist crimes.

44. Mr. NATEM (Lebanon) said that drug abuse undermined the physical and psychological integrity of the individual, destroyed family bonds and was harmful to society as a whole. Aware of those harmful effects, Lebanon had launched a campaign to eradicate the cultivation of plants used to manufacture narcotic drugs. By monitoring its entire territory, including all ports and airports with the exception of those in the Israeli-controlled zone, the Lebanese Government had managed to eliminate both illicit crops and smuggling. Psychotropic substances were thus becoming increasingly rare and their price had increased considerably. The drug control plan set up by the Government also provided for the arrest of traffickers, the seizure of clandestinely imported drugs and the elimination of the black market in narcotic drugs. A campaign to build public awareness of the problem had also been launched in the mass media, and non-governmental organizations were conducting preventive education activities. All of those activities had resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of drug addicts in Lebanon.

45. Lebanon intended to continue implementing the international conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 on the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs. It also participated in the work of all the international organizations which dealt with those questions. Although it had managed to eliminate illicit crops completely in 1993, it would continue to be vigilant in order to prevent renewed cultivation. International missions in Lebanon had noted the serious nature of Lebanon's efforts to that end. The International Narcotics Control Board had recognized, in its report, that illicit crops had been completely eradicated from Lebanon. Thus, 500,000 inhabitants of the Bekaa valley, who had once lived off the cultivation of hashish and opium, were now seeking new sources of income.

46. In June 1995, during a conference organized in Paris in cooperation with UNDP and UNDCP, a rural development plan for the Baalbek region had been considered. Unfortunately, the projects elaborated on that occasion had not yet been implemented. Lebanon was awaiting material assistance from friendly countries in order to implement substitution programmes. It also hoped to receive assistance for the establishment of health centres and the launching of programmes for the reintegration of drug addicts.

47. In the context of Lebanon's drug control activities, he also wished to mention the draft legislation soon to be ratified by the Lebanese Parliament.

The text, based on the 1988 Convention and the draft legislation of the League of Arab States, was designed to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs.

48. Mr. TARASSENKO (Russian Federation), speaking on agenda items 101, 102 and 158, said that those questions were a source of concern for the entire international community. Drug abuse, trafficking in narcotic drugs and organized crime impeded the social progress and development of many countries and were a threat to international stability and security. States alone could not effectively combat those problems. Their efforts must be accompanied by activities conducted at the international level, particularly by the United Nations, which could and should coordinate the fight against crime and narcotic drugs.

49. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/145 and 50/146 and the activities conducted by the various United Nations agencies, in particular the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which had first proposed the United Nations Declaration on Crime and Public Security and the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials.

50. The Commission had held discussions with interested parties concerning the possibility of elaborating one or more conventions against organized transnational crime and had recommended that consultations should continue on that subject. It had also decided to create a working group to examine the views of all States on the matter, as well as the draft international convention against organized transnational crime introduced by Poland.

51. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division to improve its cooperation with other United Nations bodies in the area of technical assistance, advisory services and training. It welcomed the signature of a memorandum of understanding between the Division and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of UNDP, and hoped that the countries of the region which were endeavouring to combat crime would receive the necessary support from the United Nations.

52. Regarding cooperation among States, he noted the positive outcome of the G-7 Summit meeting held in Lyon (France), during which 40 recommendations had been adopted on the subject of organized transnational crime.

53. His delegation supported the action of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which was successfully endeavouring to improve coordination among different aspects of the fight against drugs, both within the United Nations system and with other partners. The international community should continue to make the most of that cooperation in its preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on drugs, which was to be held in 1998.

54. The key international Conventions on drugs constituted the legal framework for the fight against that scourge and it was important that those States which had not yet done so should become parties to them as soon as possible. Early in 1996, the Russian Federation had acceded to the 1972 Protocol amending the

Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, and has thus become a party to all the basic drug control instruments.

55. Mr. KORNELIOU (Cyprus), speaking on agenda items 101, 102 and 158, said that his Government's determination to deal with the globalization of crime was reflected in its participation in various conventions aimed at increased international cooperation in criminal justice matters, including the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and the European Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime. His Government was working closely with the European Union and with interested Governments, and had concluded a number of agreements aimed at combating transnational crime and drug trafficking.

56. Because of the great importance attached by the Government of Cyprus to the exchange of information, Cyprus hosted full-time liaison officers from 17 countries and cooperated with INTERPOL and other agencies. For that reason, his delegation welcomed the initiative of the Polish Government in proposing a United Nations framework convention against organized transnational crime.

57. The problem of international drug control had assumed unprecedented proportions and affected all countries of the world. It was therefore essential to implement the relevant international instruments and enhance the role of the United Nations in that area.

58. For its part, his Government had adopted a series of drug control measures and would continue to support the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). That Programme must be given political support and sufficient financial resources to carry out the tasks which had been entrusted to it.

59. Given its geographical location, Cyprus was susceptible to drug trafficking. However, thanks to the efforts of the Cypriot Government, that trafficking was decreasing. The country did not have a serious drug abuse problem; however, because of the occupation of 37 per cent of its territory, it was unable to exercise control over the areas which were outside its jurisdiction. Reaffirming the significance which it attached to the issue, he said that the Cypriot Government was ready to cooperate fully with the international community in the fight against drugs. Midway through the United Nations Decade Against Drug Abuse, its goals had not yet been attained. However, as the great Brecht had said, "it may be late, but it is never too late".

60. Ms. RUSSELL (Barbados), speaking on agenda item 102, said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the remarks made on the subject by the delegations of Antigua and Barbuda and of Jamaica.

61. The documentation before the Third Committee on that subject, in particular the report of the Secretary-General (E/1996/51), showed the gigantic proportions which the problem of drugs had assumed over the past decade, and the resulting social and economic cost. The overriding conclusion was that cooperation at all levels was absolutely essential in order to deal with the global problem. The small developing countries of the Caribbean were fully aware of that necessity;

that was why they consistently sought help from international and bilateral donors and neighbouring countries to combat the growing menace. In March 1996, a European Union expert group had travelled to the Caribbean and had recognized the numerous difficulties faced by the Governments of the region in dealing with the drug problem. The particular geographic situation of Barbados and the other countries of the region made them particularly vulnerable. Yet none of the Caribbean countries had the means to monitor its territorial waters, let alone international waters, adequately.

62. Aware of the danger of drug trafficking for the region, her Government had been pleased to host, in May 1996, the first meeting in the Caribbean region dedicated to consideration of cooperation in drug control. At that meeting, the Prime Minister of Barbados had advocated setting up education programmes for young people. He had recalled that, in 1995, a National Council on Substance Abuse had been established to coordinate action aimed at demand reduction. He had stated that Barbados had comprehensive modern legislation in the area, and that the Government had undertaken the development of facilities for the treatment of addicts and enhanced the powers of detention of the Barbadian police force. He had also stressed the vulnerability of the Caribbean countries to the threat of money-laundering. That threat was even more severe because the small territories of the Caribbean were seeking to attract investments to diversify their economies and finance development programmes. That made it all the more imperative for Barbados and its neighbours to maintain their integrity.

63. Barbados welcomed the Plan of Action worked out in collaboration with UNDCP at the regional meeting. It contained detailed strategies covering all aspects of drug control, from legislation, law enforcement and the exchange of information to maritime cooperation and action to combat money-laundering. Those strategies constituted a starting point for a vigorous drug eradication campaign.

64. Barbados was grateful to the international community and to UNDCP, in particular, for the help it had been given in dealing with the drug problem in the region. Her delegation therefore associated itself with the plea for an increased allocation of resources to the Programme, and supported the proposal for the convening in 1998 of a special session of the General Assembly on the problem of drugs.

65. Mr. PEHIN MOHAMMAD (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the States members of ASEAN, recognizing the damage which drug abuse could wreak in their societies, had all adopted stringent laws to combat that menace and were enforcing them rigorously. The Declaration of Principles to Combat the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs adopted by the ASEAN countries in 1976 served as a framework for cooperation in the fight against drugs. In the same year, UNDP had assisted the countries of the region in formulating programmes focusing chiefly on prevention, rehabilitation of drug addicts, law enforcement and research. The ASEAN countries had also strengthened their collaboration with the United Nations specialized agencies and with other partners to combat the scourge. At the fifth ASEAN Summit meeting, held in Bangkok in 1995, the leaders of the member States had placed special emphasis on demand reduction programmes. A plan of action for the period 1996-1998 had been adopted, aimed at turning the

ASEAN region into a drug-free area. To that end, the countries of the region were attempting to become financially self-sufficient by sharing costs in accordance with the principle of collective responsibility, while respecting one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Cooperation must be strengthened at all levels, and countries - both consumer and producer countries - must demonstrate the necessary political will. The ASEAN countries had decided to invite representatives from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Hong Kong, as well as UNDCP and Interpol, to participate as observers in meetings on the drug problem.

66. At the subregional level, the adoption in 1995 of a plan of action by the signatories of the memorandum of understanding between UNDCP, some ASEAN member countries and their neighbours had been a landmark in the history of cooperation among the countries of the region in the fight against drugs.

67. Finally, the role played in the struggle by the region's non-governmental organizations (NGO's) must not be forgotten. The NGOs had drawn up recommendations on, inter alia, preventive education and the treatment of drug addicts, which ASEAN was examining with interest.

68. Closer coordination was necessary at the international level, in particular to check the flow of the proceeds of the illicit drug trade. Similarly, there must be a long-term commitment to the prevention of drug abuse. In that regard, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, in particular the demand reduction activities, called for the cooperation of the international community. It was essential to reach high-risk groups and to focus efforts not only on medical treatment, but also on training, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, family support, community involvement and social mobilization.

69. The ASEAN countries supported the convening in 1998 of a special session of the General Assembly on international drug control. They were convinced that the special session would provide an opportunity to explore new strategies and to enhance efforts at all levels to combat the illicit production, sale, traffic, distribution of and demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

70. Ms. RILEY (World Health Organization) said that the use of illicit substances in the world was currently on the increase, while the age at which young people were initiated into drug use was falling. Those trends had been accompanied by an enormous growth in the global production of such substances. It was estimated that approximately 15 million people worldwide were putting their health at risk by using illicit substances; one third of them, some 5 million people, were believed to be taking drugs intravenously. Many developing countries had seen a rapid increase in the use of opioids, amphetamines, cocaine and other psychotropic substances. Intravenous use increased the risk of the spread of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B and C and other blood-borne infections.

71. The main purpose of the World Health Organization (WHO) was to ensure that the impact on health and the social consequences of drug addiction were fully taken into account at all levels. The goal of the WHO Programme on Substance Abuse was to help States control the problem by carrying out continued

epidemiological surveillance and assessing the trends in psychotropic substance use at the national level. The Programme also aimed to reduce inequalities in access to health care and to protect the right of substance users to be treated with humanity and respect. Particular attention was paid to both health promotion and health protection, while emphasis was placed on involving the community in prevention activities, particularly within the context of primary health care.

72. Given the range of social and economic factors which came into play, there must be close cooperation between the various sectors of society and between the international partners. A stronger international focus on demand reduction was now required. WHO therefore supported the adoption of guiding principles of demand reduction. It also believed that demand reduction should focus not only on illicit drugs, but also on alcohol and tobacco, prescription drugs and volatile solvents. It was vital that any reduction in the use of illicit drugs should not be offset by increases in the use of other substances.

73. Within the context of the joint programme framework established with UNDCP, WHO was supporting a growing number of joint initiatives. Thus, through its Programme on Substance Abuse, it was playing a leading role in coordinating the Plan of Action for Drug Abuse Prevention among Children and Youth in Especially Difficult Circumstances. WHO would continue to support collaboration between the United Nations system and Member States in various areas, including the fight against drug abuse and trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations.

74. Mr. CHOMAR (Mozambique) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the remarks of previous speakers, in particular the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and the representative of Swaziland, who had emphasized the importance of cooperation among States to combat organized crime. Mozambique was particularly concerned over the theft of and illicit trafficking in arms, vehicles and other goods, a phenomenon which was directly linked to drug trafficking. His delegation appealed to all Member States to promote increased awareness of those grave problems and to consider the adoption of strategies to combat them as a matter of urgency. To that end, cooperation between the law-enforcement services and criminal justice administrations must be enhanced and the demand for drugs must be reduced through coordinated programmes at the regional level.

75. In his delegation's view, it was no longer a question of creating new mechanisms to combat illicit trafficking. Rather, efforts must be focused on the implementation of the existing international instruments, in particular, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. In accordance with resolution 3 (XXXIX) of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of 25 April 1996, countries should aim to accede to the international conventions on drug control before the end of the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.